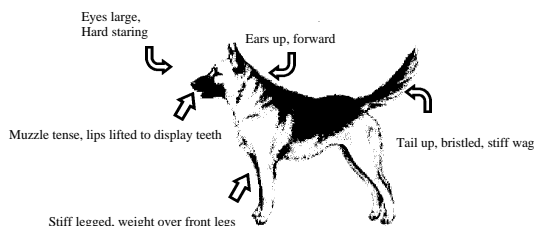




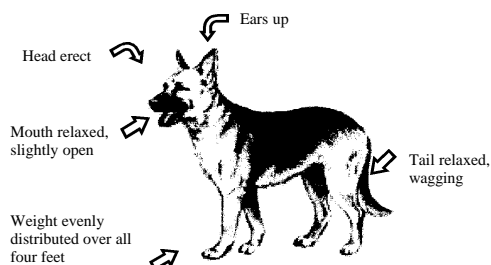
Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

Reading Canine Body Postures



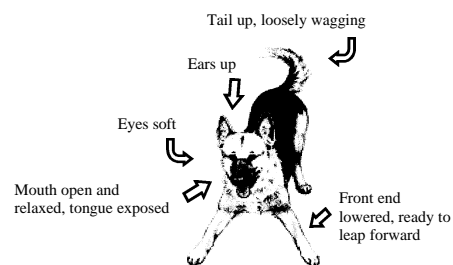
AROUSAL

The dog has been stimulated by something in his environment. When the dog is excited by something pleasurable, the hackles will be down and the tail will be carried a little lower and will loosely wag. The muzzle will be relaxed and the tongue may be seen. This posture may be displayed to subordinates in order to express higher ranking pack position.



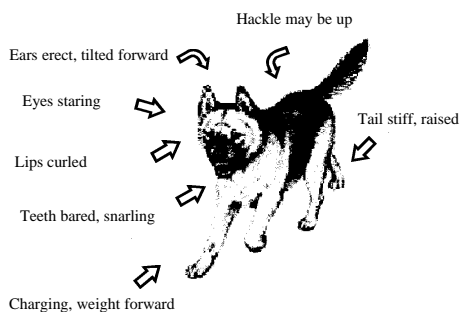
NEUTRAL RELAXED

Although dogs cannot speak, they do display their state of mind via their body language. By taking careful note of ear position, pupil dilation, facial tension (particularly around the muzzle and forehead), tail carriage and body weight distribution, an observer can detect whether a dog is relaxed or fearful, or acting in a submissive or dominant manner toward the observer.



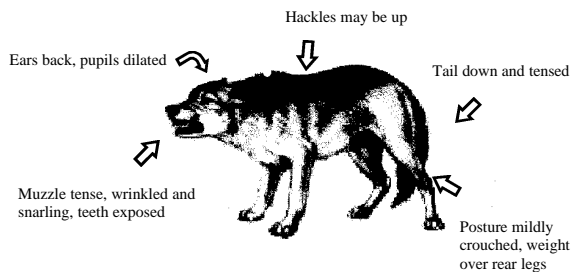
PLAY SOLICITATION

The play bow is a combination of dominant and submissive gestures. It is offered to invite another to play or as part of courtship behavior.



AGGRESSIVE ATTACK

This threatening posture is used to chase another away or, if need be, to attack in order to protect possessions, pack or self.



DEFENSIVE AGGRESSION

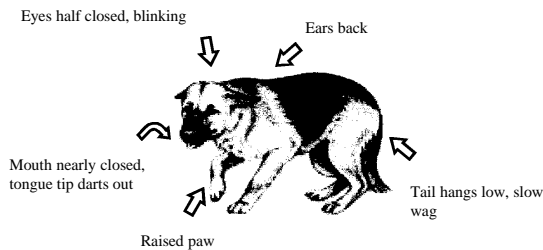
When fearful, a dog will give warning signals to indicate he does not wish to be approached. If, unheeded, he will bite to protect himself.

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs,
Contact (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov
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Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

Reading Canine Body Postures Dog To Dog

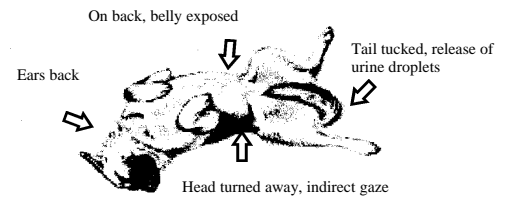
When dog meets dog, they signal their status in relation to each other. Actions like raising a forepaw, looking away, licking or nudging at the other's muzzle or bowing with the forelegs are submissive gestures. Mounting, raising up stiffly on one's toes, or placing one's head over another's withers (the place where the neck meets the back) indicate the more dominate individual of that interaction.



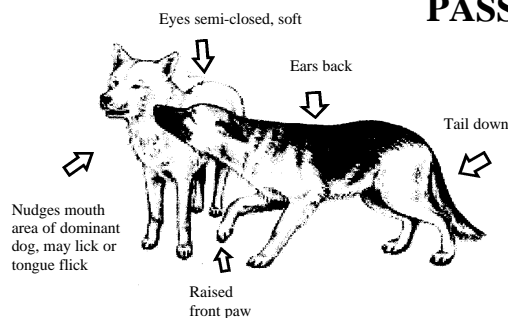
ACTIVE SUBMISSION

This pacifying posture is used when a dog acknowledges another dog or human's higher social ranking, or to inhibit another's aggression.

Bellying up indicates surrender, a pacifying gesture offered to a more dominant or aggressive individual.



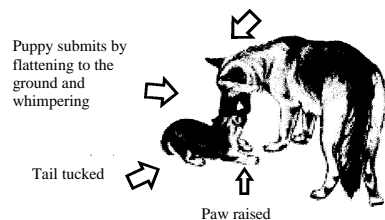
PASSIVE SUBMISSION



A submissive dog may greet a more dominant dog with a muzzle nudge as an appeasement (pacifying) gesture.

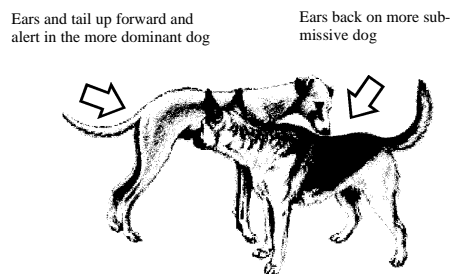
GREETING BEHAVIOR

Mother quickly snarls and places mouth around muzzle or head of puppy



MATERNAL CORRECTION

A mother dog will discipline a pup with a quick muzzle grasp. The pup learns to offer submissive body postures.



GREETING POSTURE

Dogs sniff each other's genital region when greeting to gather information on sexual status.

Staying Safe Around Dogs

About a half a million dog bites are reported each year, and many more than that go unreported. Dog bites range from little nips to fatal maulings, and children are most often the victims. Although most dogs are friendly, dogs can bite for a number of reasons, and even a friendly dog can bite under certain circumstances. Knowing the danger signals will help reduce the chance of being bitten.

HOW CAN I AVOID BEING BITTEN?

- ALWAYS ask permission before you pet a dog. If the owner says it's OK, observe the dog. Let the dog sniff the back of your hand with your fingers loosely curled. If the dog's body language says its okay, pet the dog gently and slowly, standing quietly.
- NEVER approach a strange dog, particularly one that is confined or restrained.
- DO NOT pet a dog, even your own, without letting him/her see and sniff you first. Dogs may sniff other body parts; that is how they discover who you are.
- NEVER go into a house or yard with a dog without its owner present.
- DO NOT run past a dog or turn your back on a dog and run away. A dog's natural instinct is to chase and catch fleeing prey.
- DO NOT jump around, wave your arms or scream around dogs, even when playing. These actions excite the dog and stimulate its chase response.
- DO NOT tease dogs, even when you are playing. Dogs could respond by biting.
- DO NOT put your face near a dog's face, (or hug the dog) when you are saying hello or playing.
- DO ask friends to put their dog on a leash or in the house before entering their yard. Dogs tend to guard their homes and yards. Even if you or your child has met a dog, it may still feel the need to protect its territory.
- DO be sure that your family dog respects all family members, including children. If your dog begins to challenge people it will most likely begin with the smallest, the children. Look for signs: does your dog treat your child with less respect than it treats you? Does your child interact gently and safely with your dog and friends dogs?
- DO teach your child to never, ever approach a dog that is tied up or confined in a friend's yard or garage. Dogs that are kept confined can be overly protective.
- DO NOT allow young children to be unsupervised with dogs, ever.
- DO NOT assume that you need an aggressive dog to protect your home. An aggressive dog is far more likely to attack your family or friends, as well as an intruder. A stable, socialized, and well-behaved dog is the best protection.
- DO NOT hit or strike your dog, either with your hand or an object, **for any reason**. This teaches your dog directly that aggression is acceptable in your home. Dogs can't hit back when they are frustrated or scared, but they can bite - often a more vulnerable member of the household.
- DO NOT play tug-of-war or roughhousing games for fun with your dog, or allow your children to play them. This teaches your dog that biting and aggressiveness is a game. Although dogs enjoy these games, they also take them seriously as power struggles. A dog that thinks he is "winning" these games over a child will feel more entitled to growl or bite the child. Instead, teach your dog to play fetch, find-it, tricks and obedience.

Staying Safe Around Dogs

You can help yourself and children to stay safe around dogs by reading the following information geared towards adults, and by reviewing the information in MCACC's Activity Book For Children of All Ages.

An estimated half a million children are bitten by dogs each year, and a majority of bites are inflicted by dogs owned by the child's family, neighbor, relative or friend. Many of these dogs are euthanized. Something is clearly not working with the way we are interacting with our canine family members. We believe that much dog aggression is due to misunderstandings between dogs and humans. Most bites are preventable through education. Our goal is safe children and safe dogs. Please help us in achieving this goal.

WHAT DO DOGS THAT BITE HAVE IN COMMON?

- They have NOT been through a complete obedience class

- They DO NOT obey humans willingly
- Their owners encourage or tolerate aggressive behavior
- They are often un-neutered males (note - neutering alone is not enough)
- They are allowed to roam freely throughout the neighborhood

Although not all dogs that bite fit this profile, these are characteristics that often lead to serious behavior problems. Any dog can bite if it is provoked or afraid.

DOGS CAN BITE FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS:

- **DOMINANCE.** Dogs that are not obedience trained, and are not well-socialized can consider themselves to be dominant. Dogs that are dominant believe it is their role to be in charge. If it doesn't like your behavior, it will put you in your place - with a growl, snarl, or bite.
- **PROTECTIVE AGGRESSION.** Dogs can feel protective of their food, toys, owners, house, yard, and car. Dogs take protection seriously. If a dog is feeling protective, it may bite a child that takes away a toy, or wanders in to its yard.
- **FEAR AGGRESSION.** Any dog that is frightened may bite for self-protection.
- **PREDATORY AGGRESSION.** Dogs that roam like wild dogs, act like wild dogs.